



WEALTH & WELLNESS GROUP

Did You Know? Locksmith

Not all Locksmiths have a license: Only 15 states require licensing in this industry and Michigan is not one of them.

The first locks date to the ancient Egyptian culture, some 4,000 years ago, and the oldest locks featuring keys were made in 704 BC.

Those living in Colonial America did not have locks on their doors. Locks were expensive and hard to make. However, they did have locks designed to protect valuables in chests or lock boxes.

James Sargent created the first combination lock. The locks, which he developed in 1857, contained a mechanism which is still used in bank vaults today.

Famed magician, Harry Houdini worked as a locksmith for years. He studied the trade and learned to perfect lockpicking. He even provided his skills as a locksmith for free to those who needed help.

Walter Schlage created the first cylindrical style pin-tumbler type of lock in the 1920s. It was considered one of the most advanced options and the company remains one of the most innovative today.

Source: 1-800-unlocks.com



PREPARATION OVER PREDICTION

September is usually a black eye for stocks but all the major indices surprised to the upside. The Dow edged up 1.85% and S&P 500 popped 2.14%. The Nasdaq was up 2.7%, logging its best September since 2013. For the quarter, the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq advanced 5.5% and 2.6%, respectively, with both scoring their fourth consecutive quarter of gains. The Dow also booked its best quarter since 2023, ending up 8.2%.

The monthly and quarterly gains can be attributed to ongoing optimism surrounding a soft landing, encouraging inflation results, the recent Fed rate cuts, and Chinese stimulus. Historical trends are also on the markers side. Going back to 1945, when the stock market is positive in September during an election year, it led to a gain in the following October nearly 80% of the time. Additionally, Nine of the S&P 500's eleven sectors have risen in the fourth quarter of election years since 1992. (source: CFRA Research)

The two biggest factors that could slow down the markets progress include broader conflict in the Middle East which is likely to push the price of oil higher, and US elections which are just about a month away. Additionally, the next two employment reports for September and October, will play important roles in determining the size and timing of the next interest-rate cut from the Federal Reserve. September's numbers already came in better than expected, muddling up the potential for the Fed to reduce rates at it's next meeting.

Of course, all eyes seem fixated on the tight race between Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump, as well as which party keeps or wrestles control in congress. For now, we will leave the election forecasting to the political experts and instead focus on what the election may mean to your portfolio and retirement plans.

If we take a historical, data driven perspective at how sectors and markets have performed during previous administrations one thing stands out: There is no clear relationship between a president's political party and stock market results. Rather, market movement is determined by a complex interplay of the economy, corporate fundamentals (revenues, profit margins, innovation), valuation, business cycle, and market sentiment to name a few.

Policy can have an impact on these variables but it is not a primary driver of returns. In fact, it functions more as a lag rather than predictor. Therefore, pricing political control into future returns is difficult because it's hard to know what if anything actually gets enacted. After all enacting presidential priorities/promises is dependent on those serving in Congress.

Overall, when it comes to markets and political events, the theme for us is "preparation rather than prediction." Going forward, we do expect some volatility as markets jostle with geopolitical risks and campaign mud slinging, but we view this as an opportunity to diversify and adjust portfolio risk.

As a result, we continue to see value in fixed income as the trajectory for interest rates is lower, as well as opportunities in both oil and energy. Issues in the Middle East are likely to push the price of oil higher and the AI craze is poised to consume massive amount of electricity for years to come. Both sectors have served each party well in the recent past.

Trivia:

- 1) What is the name of the fermented cabbage dish that's a staple in Korean cuisine?
- 2) What alcoholic beverage is made from juniper berries?
- 3) According to Greek mythology, who was the first woman on earth?
- 4) In what year did the Titanic sink?



One of the primary ways we grow our business is through client referrals.

We never charge to meet with new clients and discuss their current situation.

Many times people just don't know who to trust and want an **unbiased second opinion** from a trusted expert and **fiduciary**.

Direct Referral Calls:
248-890-0834

Our Services...

- Flat-Fee Second Opinion
- Investment Management
- Do-It-Together Investing
- Retirement Plan Reviews
- Seminars and Workshops



Robert Laura, AAMS, CMFC, CRPC

Wealth & Wellness Group
690 Hope St., Suite B
Brighton MI 48116
(248) 890-0834
rl@robertlaura.com

“Big Board” Retirement

I was recently checking out at Home Depot when a younger man walked in. He was greeted by the self-checkout attendant who asked him, “Is there something I can help you find?”

Without any hesitation, the jovial young man replied, “Yes, I need a big board.”

Baffled by the response, the attendant paused as she tried to figure out how to better understand his needs, so she asked, “Is there a particular size?”

The young man responded, “Yes, just a big one.”

It was such an honest and innocent response that I couldn't help but chuckle. I started thinking to myself, what could he possibly be looking for.

Is a big board, a sheet of plywood, a 2x4, or maybe a 4x4 post. Did he perceive a “big board” as a long board, or a wide board, and what about the tools and other resources he would need to do something with it? Did he have a hammer & nails or a drill & screws?

As I was leaving the store, the attendant directed him to the lumber aisles. I can only imagine what he thought when he got there and saw every conceivable option available. It's a funny story that can happen to people as they work their way towards retirement. They have this very vague, “big board” image in their head about life after work, but have little to no idea as to what they are really in for.

Like the different dimensions of wood, retirement can mean different things to different people. For those who walk into it with a “big board” mentality they can quickly realize it's not necessarily easy to replace your work identity, fill your time with meaningful tasks, keep mentally and physically active as well as relevant and connected.

If you've ever done any DIY projects for your home, you have likely heard the saying “measure twice, cut once... or as some say it, measure once, cuss twice.” Like the young man who came into the store with no measurement, it's important for new and soon to be retirees to measure more than their finances in the transition.

Key additional measurements include determining what you may lose in making the retirement transition rather than just focusing on what you will gain and assessing how your personality will be impacted by retirement. For example, if you're a Type A personality who prefers routine and structure in your day, assuming that you will suddenly be able to change to a “go with the flow” type person now that you are retired doesn't usually work out. It may last for a week or two, but ultimately retirement doesn't change who you are, which means that the better you understand yourself and your personality the better transition you can make.

The reality is, whatever “boards” you frame your retirement with, it's important to realize you can't caulk around the gaps or use wood putty to fix it. It's essential to have a specific plan that not only meets your needs and matches your personality, but is also built on a strong foundation with the right tool and resources.

Trivia Answers

- 1) Kimchi
- 2) Gin
- 3) Pandora
- 4) 1912